

The Whole

LIFE and DEATH

OF

LONG MEG,

OF

WEISTMANGEL.



THE HISTORY of  
King Meg of Westminster

CHAP. I.

Where Meg was born, her coming up to London, and herriage to the honest Carrier.

**I**N the reign of Henry VIII. was born in Lancashire, a maid called LONG MEG. At eighteen years old she came to London to get her a service. Father Willis the Carrier being the Waggoner and her neighbour, brought her up with some other lasses. After a tedious journey, being in sight of the desired city she demanded the cause why they looked sad? — We have no money said one, to pay our fare. — But Meg replies, If that be all, I shall answer your demands, and

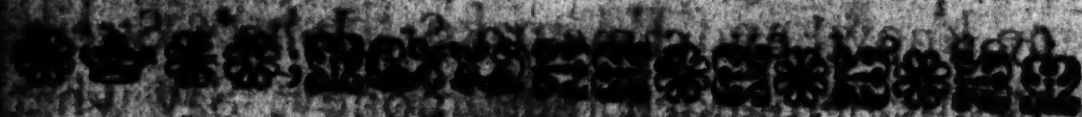


this put them in some comfort. But as soon as they came to St. John's Street, Willis demanded their money. Say what you will have, quoth she. Ten shillings a piece, said he. But we have not so much about us, said she. — Nay, then I will have it out of your bones. — Marry, content replied Meg; and taking a staff in her



hand, so belaboured him and his man, that he desired her for God's sake, to hold her hand. — Not I, said she, unless you bestow an angel on us for good luck, and swear e'er we depart to get us good mistresses.

The carrier, having felt the strength of her arm, thought it best to give her the money, and promised not to go till he had got them good places.



## C. H. A. P. I. I.

OF her being placed in Westminster, and  
what she did at her Place.

**T**HE Carrier having set up his horses,  
went with the lasses to the Eagle in  
Westminster, and told the landlady he  
had brought her three fine Lancashire  
lasses, and being she often asked him to  
get her a maid, she might now take her  
choice. Marry, said she, I want one at  
present, and here are three gentlemen  
who shall give their opinions. — As soon  
as they came in, they blessed themselves  
crying,

“ Domine, Domine. vice Originem.”

So her mistress demanded what was her  
name; Margaret, forsooth, said she, brisk-  
ly — And what work can you do? She  
answered she had not been bred unto her  
needle, but to hard labour, as washing,  
brewing, and baking, and could make a  
house clean — I don’t care quoth the hos-  
tess, a lassy wench, and I like thee well,  
for I have often persons that will not pay



Mistrels, said she, if any such come, let me know, and I'll make them pay, I'll engage.—Nay, this is true, said the carrier, for my cartcase felt it; and then he told them how she served him.—On this Sir John de Castile, in a brayado, would needs make an experiment of her vast strength; and asked her, If she durst exchange a box o' the ear with him. Yes, quoth she, if my mistress will give me leave. This granted, she stood to receive Sir John's blow, who gave her a box with all his might; but it stirred her not at all; but Meg gave him such a memorandum on his ear that Sir John fell down at her feet.—By my faith, said another, she strikes a blow like an ox, for she hath knocked down an ass. — 66 Meg was taken into service.



## C H A P. III.

The Method Meg took to make one of the Vicars pay his Score.

**M**EG so bestirred herself, she pleased her mistress, and for her tallness was called Long Meg of Westminster.

One of the lubbers of the Abbey had a mind to try her strength so coming with six of his associates one frosty morning calls for a pot of ale, which being done he asked what he owed? to which Meg answers, Five Shillings and three pence.

O thou foul scallion, I owe thee but three shillings and one penny, and no more will I pay thee. And turning to his landlady, complained how Meg had charged her too much. The foul-ill take me, quoth Meg, if I misreckon him one penny; and therefore Vicar, before thou goest out of these doors, I shall make thee pay every penny; and then she immediately lent him such a box on the ear, as made him to reel again. The Vicar then steps up to her, and together both



of them by the ears. — The Vicar's head was broke, and Meg's cloath torn off her back. So the Vicar laid hold of her hair, but he being shaved, she could not have that advantage; so laying hold of his ears, and keeping his pate to the post, asked him how much he owed her? As much as you please, said he. — So you knave, quoth she, I must knock out of



your bald pate my reckoning. And with that she began to beat a plain long between the post and his pate. But when he felt such pain, he roared out he would pay the whole. — But she would not let him go, until he laid it down, which he did, being jeered by his friends.

CHAP. IV.  
Of her fighting and conquering Sir James  
of Castile, a Spanish Knight.

ALL this time Sir James continued his suit to Meg's Mistress; but to no purpose. So coming in one day, and seeing her melancholy, asked what ailed her? for if any one has wronged you I will requite you. — Marry, quoth she, a base knave in a white satin doublet has abused me, and if you revenge my quarrel, I shall think you love me. — Where is he, quoth Sir James? — Marry, says she, he said he would be in St. George's Fields. — Well, quoth he, do you and the Doctor go along with me, and you shall see how I'll punish the knave.

Unto this they agreed, and sent Meg into St. George's Fields beforehand. Yonder, said she, walks the fellow by the wind-mill. Follow me hostess, said Sir James, I will go to him. But Meg passed as if she would have gone by,



Nay, stay, said Sir James, you shall not so; I am that gentleman's champion, and fairly for her sake, will have you by the ears. — With that Meg drew her sword, and so it they went.

At the first blow he hit him on the head, and often endangered him. — At last he struck his weapon out of his hands, and stepping up to him swore, all the world should not save him. — O save me, Sir, said he, I am a Knight, and it is but a woman's matter; do not spill my blood. — Wert thou twenty Knights, said Meg, and was the King himself here, I would not spare thy life, unless you grant me one thing. — Let it be what it will, you shall be obeyed. — Marry, said she, that this night you wait on my plate at this woman's house, and confess me to be your master.

This being yielded to, and a supper provided, Thomas Usher and others were invited to make up the feast; and unto whom Sir James told what had happened. — Pho! said Usher, jeeringly, it is no such great dishonour for to be foiled by an English gentleman, since Cæsar the Great was himself driven back by them.

extraordinary courage. At this juncture Meg came in, having got on her man's attire.—Then said Sir James, This is that



valiant gentleman whose courage I shall ever esteem. Hereupon she pulling off her hat, her hair fell about her ears, and she said, I am no other than Long Meg of Westminster; and so you are heartily welcome.

At this they all fell a laughing, nevertheless at supper-time, according to agreement, Sir James was a proper page; and after having leave of her mistress, sat in the room like her Majesty. — Thus Sir James was disgraced for his love, and Meg was counted a proper woman.



## CHAP. V.

Her Usage to the Bailiff of Westminster,  
who came into her Mistress's and ar-  
rested her Friend.

A Bailiff having for the purpose took  
forty shillings, arrested a gentleman  
in Meg's mistress's house, and desired the  
company to keep peace. She coming in  
asked what was the matter? O said he I'm  
arrested.—Arrested! and in our house!  
why this is an unkind act to arrest one  
in our house; but however take an An-  
gel, and let him go. No said the Bailiff I  
cannot, for the creditor is at the door.  
Bid him come in says she, and I'll make  
up the matter. So the creditor came in;  
but being found obstinate, she tapped  
him on the head with a quart pot, and  
b'd him go out of doors like a knave; he  
can but go to prison, quoth she, where  
he shall not stay long, if all the friends I  
have can fetch him out.

The creditor went away with a good  
knock, and the Bailiff was going with his

prisoner. Nay, said she, I'll bring a fresh pot to drink with him. She came into the parlour with a rope, and knitting her brows, Sir Knave, said she, I'll learn thee to arrest a man in our house, I'll make thee a spectacle for all catch-poles; and tossing the rope round his middle, said to the gentleman, Sir, away, shift for yourself, I'll pay the bailiff his fees before he and I part. Then she dragged the bailiff unto the back side of the house, making him go up to the chin in a pond, and then paid him his fees with a cudgel; after which he went away with the amends in his hands; for she was so well beloved that no person would meddle with her.





## C H A P. VI.

Of her meeting with a Nobleman, and  
her Usage to him and the Watch.

NOW it happened the once put on a  
suit of man's apparel. The same  
night it fell out, a young nobleman being  
disposed for mirth, would go abroad to  
see the fashions, and coming down the  
strand, espies her, and seeing such a tall  
fellow, asked him whither he was go-  
ing? — Marry, said she, to St. Nicholas's  
to buy a calve's head. How much money  
hast thou? In faith said she, little enough.  
Will you lend me any? — Aye, said he,  
putting his thumb into her mouth.  
There's a tester. She gave him a good  
knock on the ear, and said, There's a  
penny I owe you two-pence. Where  
the Nobleman drew, and his man  
she was as active as they. In the  
morn'g she goes, but she drove them home  
to a little chandler's shop, in which  
the Constable came in to see  
her? and having asked what she

the nobleman told his name, at which they all pulled off their caps. — And what is your name, said the Constable? Mine, said she, is Cuthbert Curry, knave. — Upon this the constable commanded some to lay hold on her, and carry her to the Compter. — She out with her sword and set upon the watch, and behaved very resolutely; but the Constable calling for clubs, Meg was forced to cry out, Masters, hold your hands, I am your friend; but not Long Meg of Westminster. — So they all laid their hands, and the nobleman took them all to the tavern; and thus ended the fray.





## C H A P. VII.

Meg goes a shroving, fights the Thieves of St. James's Corner, and makes them restore Father Willis the Carrier his hundred Marks.

NOT only the cities of London and Westminster, but Lancashire also, was full of Meg's fame: so they desired old Willis the carrier to call upon her, which he did, taking with him the other lasses. Meg was joyful to see them, and it being Shrove-Tuesday, Meg went with them to Knightsbridge, and there spent most of the day, with repeating tales of their adventures in Lancashire, and so tarried the carrier, who again and again enquired how all did there; and made the time seem shorter than it was. The night following on, the carrier and the two other lasses were importunate to be gone. Meg was loath to set out, and so stood behind to discharge the reckoning, and promised to overtake them.

It was their misfortune at St. James's Corner to meet with two thieves, who waiting there for their prey, set on them, and took an hundred marks from Willis the Carrier, and from the wenches their gowns and purses. Meg came up immediately after, and then the thieves, seeing her in a female habit, thought to take her purse also; but she behaved herself so well, they began to give ground. Then said Meg, Our gowns and purses against your hundred marks; win all and wear all. — Content, quoth they. — Now ladies pray for me, said Meg. — With that she buckled with these two knives, beat one, and so hurt the other, that they entreated her to spare their lives. — I will, said she, upon conditions. — Upon what condition, said they. — Then said she, shall be these;

1. That you never hurt a woman, in any company she is in.

2. That you never hurt lame or potent men.

3. That you never hurt any child or woman.

4. That you rob no carrier of his money or goods.



- 5- That you rob no manner of poor  
or distressed.

Are you content with these conditions?  
We are, said they. I have no book about  
me, said she, but will you swear on my  
cock tail? which they accordingly did,  
and then she returned the wenches their  
owns and purses, and old Father Wit-  
the Carrion a hundred marks.

The men desiring to know who it  
was had so lustily bewinged them, said,  
to alleviate your sorrow, I pray tell us  
your name? — She smiling, replied, If  
any one asks you who banged your bones,  
say, Long Meg of Westminster once met  
with you.



## C H A P. VIII.

Meg's Fellow-Servant pressed; her Usage of the Constable; and of her taking Press-Money to go to Bologne.

**I**N those days were wars between England and France, and a hot press about London. The Constables of Westminster pressed Meg's fellow-servant and told them if they took him her mistress was undone.

All this could not persuade the Constable, but Harry must go in which lent the Constable a knock. Notice being given to the Captain, he asked who struck him? Harry, quoth Meg: I did, and if I did not love soldiers: I love you so too. So taking a cavalier from man's hand, she performed the exercise with such dexterity, that they wonder whereupon she said, Press no man, give me press-money, and I will go myself. At this they all laughed, and the Captain gave her an Angel. Whereupon she went with him to Bologne.

C H A P.



## C H A P. IX.

her beating the Frenchmen off the Walls of Bologne, for which gallant behaviour she is rewarded by the King with eight-pence per Day for Life.

WHEN Henry passing the sea, took Bologne, hereupon the Dauphin with a great number of men, surprised, and retook it. Meg being a Laundress in the town, raised the best of the women with a halberd in her hand, came to the walls, on which some of the French were entered, and threw scalding water and dishes at them, that she often obliged them to quit the town before the soldiers were in arms. And at the sally she came to the foremost with her halberd in her hand to pursue the chase.

The report of this deed being come to the ears of the King, he allowed her for eight-pence a day.

## C H A P.

## C H A P. X.

Of her fighting and beating a Frenchman  
before Bologne.

**D**uring this she observed one who  
a bravado tossed his pike. She  
blew pride, desired a drum, to signify  
a young soldier would have a pull at  
with him. It was agreed on, and  
place appointed life against life.  
On the day the Frenchmen came,  
Meg met him, and without any  
fell to blows, and after a long con-  
flict overcame him, and cut off his head.  
Then pulling off her hat her hair fell  
down her ears.

By this the Frenchmen knew it was  
a woman, and the English giving a  
she by a Drummer sent the Dauphin  
soldiers head, and said, An English  
man sent it.

The Dauphin much commended  
sending her an hundred crowns for  
valour.



## C H A P. XI.

her coming to England, and being  
Married.

H E was in France being over,  
Meg came to Westminster, and  
met a soldier, who hearing of her  
tricks, took her into a room, and mak-  
ing her strip to her petticoat, took one  
and gave her another, saying, As  
I have heard of her manhood, he was de-  
termined to try her. — But Meg held  
fast her head, whereupon he gave her  
one or four blows, and she in submission  
fell down on her knees, desiring him to  
spare her. For, said she, whatever I do  
or suffer, it behoves me to be obedient  
to you; and it shall never be said, If I  
met a knave that injures me, Long  
will I be her husband's master; and there-  
fore spare me as you please. — So they grew  
friends, and never quarrelled after.

## C H A P. XII.

Long Meg's Usage to an angry Miller

**M**EG going one day with her neighbours to make merry, a miller Epping looking out, the boy they with them about fourteen years old. Put out Miller, put out.—What me put out, said he? A thief's head and said the other.

At this the Miller came down and licked him, which Meg endeavoured to prevent, whereupon he beat her the wrong the stick from him, and cudgelled him severely; and having sent the boy to the mill for an e sack, and put the miller in all by head; and then fastening him to the hawled him up half way, and left him hanging. The poor miller out for help, and if his wife had come, he had surely been killed, and mill for want of corn set on fire.



## C H A P. XIII.

her keeping House at Islington, and  
her Laws.

AFTER Marriage she kept a house at  
Islington. The Constable coming  
one night, he would needs search Meg's  
house, whereupon she came down in her  
petticoat, with a cudgel, and said Mr. Con-  
stable, take care you go not beyond your  
commission, for if you do, I'll so cudgel  
you as you never was since Islington has  
men.—The Constable seeing her frown,  
and her he would take her word, and so  
departed.

Meg, because in her house there should  
be a good decorum, hang up a table,  
containing these principles:

First, If a Gentleman or Yeoman had  
charge about him, and told her of it,  
he would repay him if he lost it, but if  
he did not reveal it, and said he was rob-  
bed, he should have ten bathnadoes, and  
afterwards be turned out of doors.

Secondly, Whoever called for meat,  
and had no money to pay, should have

a box on the ear, and a crook on the back, that he might be marked, and trusted more.

**Thirdly,** If any good fellow came and said he wanted money, he should have his belly full of meat, and two or three of drink.

**Fourthly,** If any fellow came in, and made a quarrel, and would not pay reckoning, to turn into the fields and about or two with Meg, the maid, the house should very beat him, and thrust him out of doors.

These and many such principles, established in her house, which kept it all and quiet.

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